



Linux Rules Graffiti in Berlin

Can You Market an Open Source Project ?

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The Speakers

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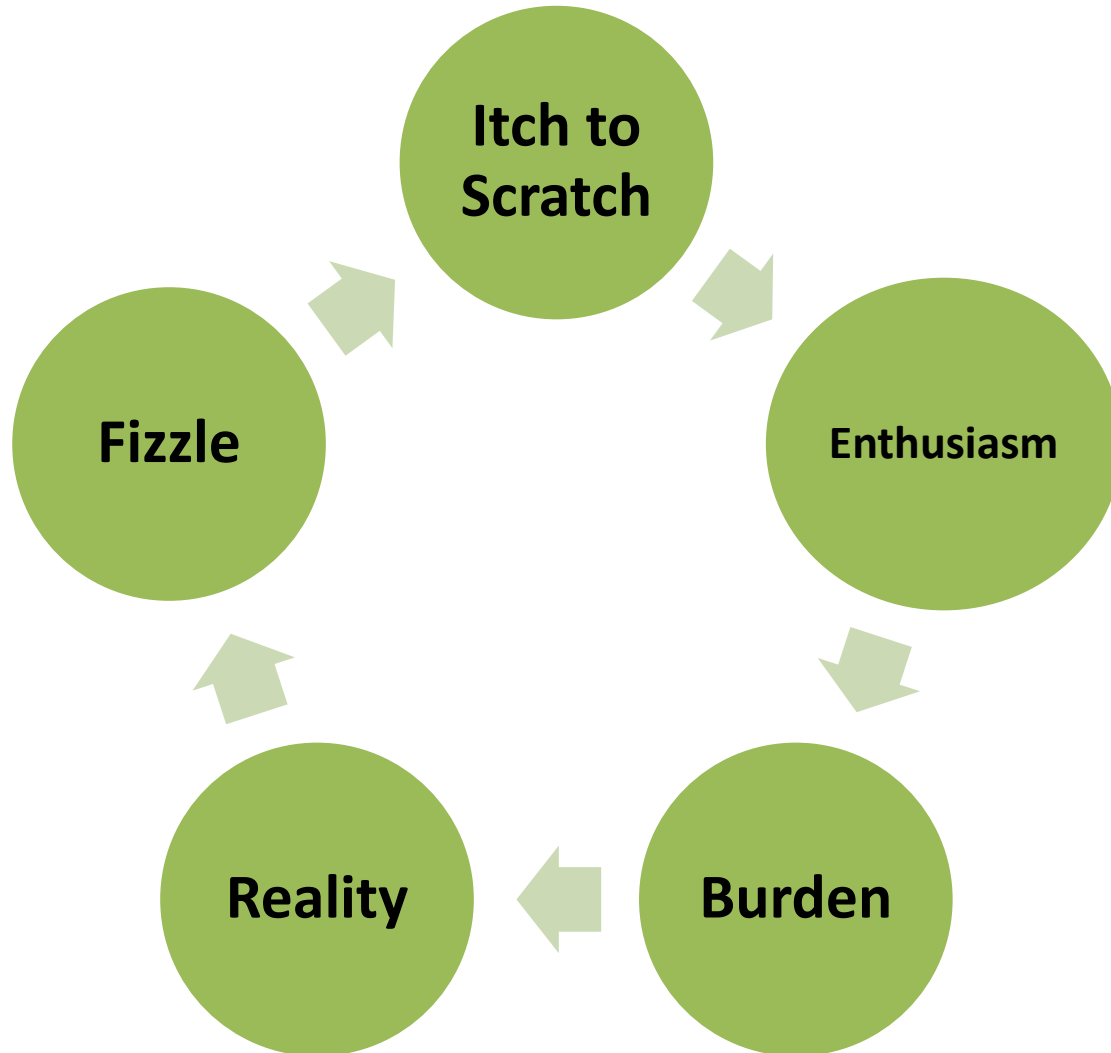
Topics

- What does a project cycle generally look like
- Why marketing is normally not done
- Objective of marketing in Open Source
- Corporate Open Source Marketing
- Marketing Open Source Projects
- Case Study - Yocto Project
- Takeaway



If no one knows you are there,
then there you are

Project Cycle



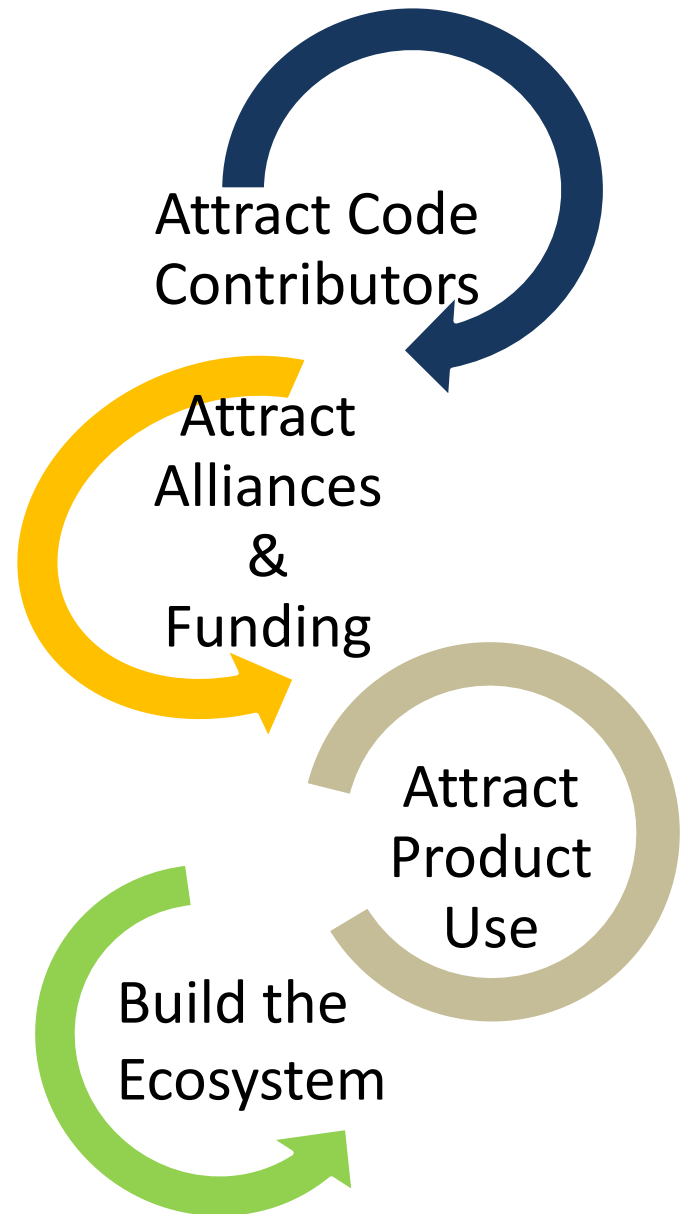
Why isn't there more marketing associated with open source projects?

- It's not code
 - Inherent distrust of marketing objectives and fluff that implies things that are not real
 - Value in objectivity, technical merit and independence
- Open source is not proprietary
 - Don't want to look “corporate” or “owned” or “biased”
 - Corporate marketing is more about image than substance?
- Few marketers in the open source community
 - Acceptance and credibility based on code contribution
 - Surely project creators can market as well as anyone

You can't market a project into acceptance
Code really is king

That being
said:

You still
need to
market an
open source
project as
you would
any service
or product



Who Markets?

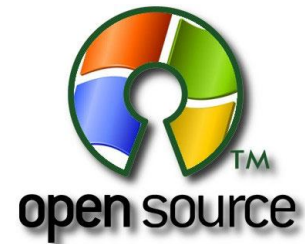
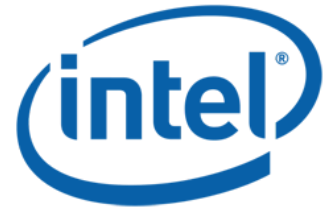


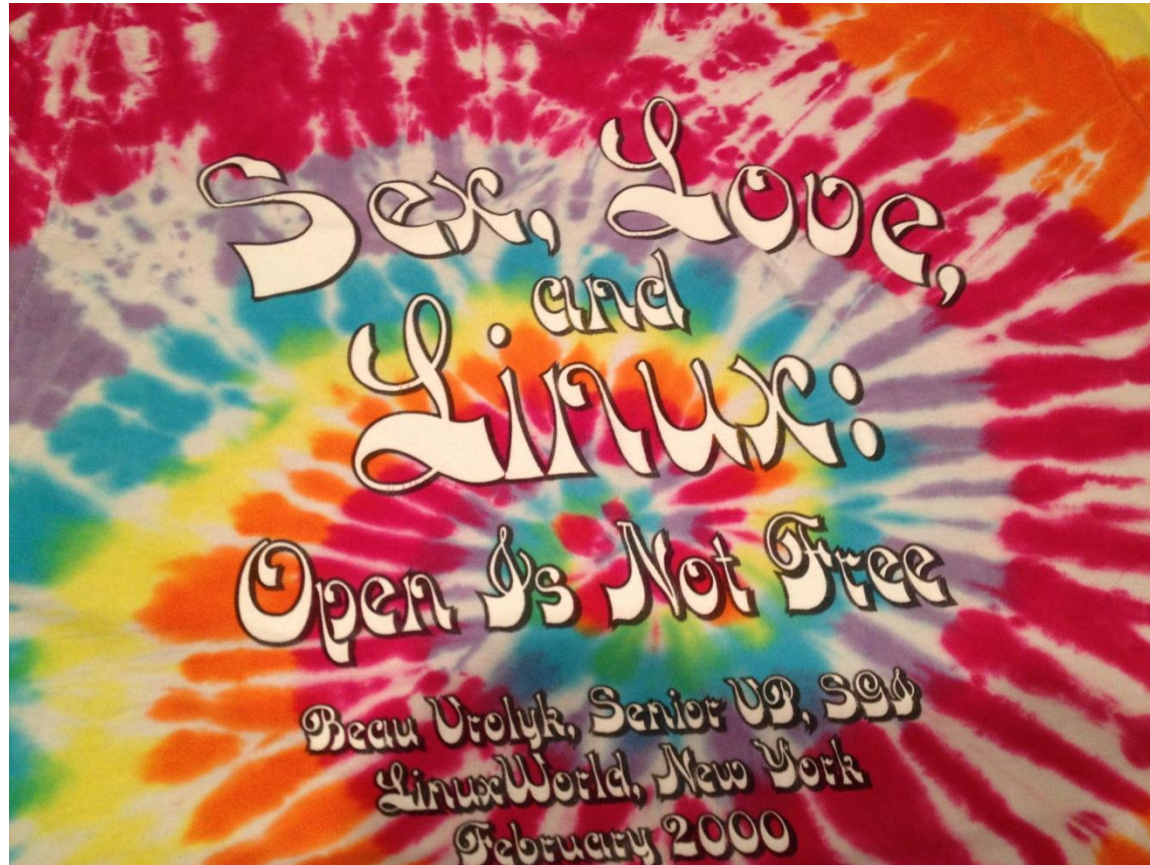
- IBM Overnight changed their image when they came out with this campaign in 2001 from a blue suited company to a true supporter of Eclipse and Linux on their Servers

Corporations as contributors

Corporations have both internal and external community building to do

- External community building is often through attending and sponsoring different events
- The messaging and marketing is often centered around contributions, moving the industry forward and not about products or technology
- The whole tone of marketing is not their slick, corporate marketing style used for products
- Internal community building is critical to why Open Source, why contributions are important and how to market and message open source





My SGI T-shirt

We wanted to grab people's attention with this T-Shirt and we did

Corporations with open source based products

- Have a balancing act of leveraging open source and finding the place where they add value
- Be technical in their marketing but not religious; Merits not belief; Utility not Freedom
- Talk about benefits, ROI, Value to the CIO
- Talk about alignment with open source
 - for cost reduction, mainline, standards based
 - to continue innovation and leverage



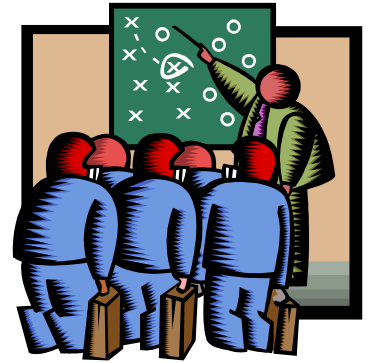
What about Marketing for Projects?



Marketing can be edgy, out of the box and viral, or very corporate like.

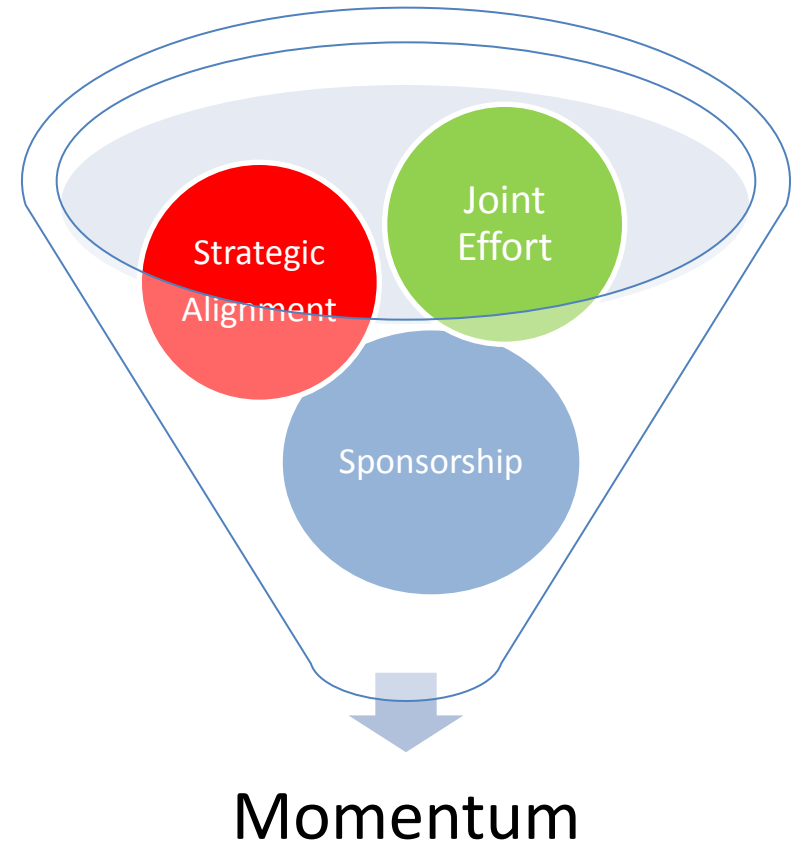
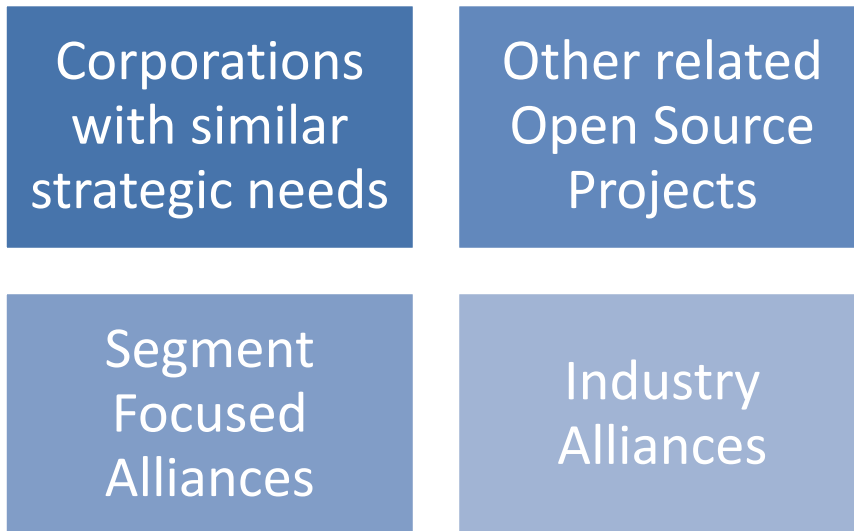
Start with a Strategic Plan

- **What is your product?**
 - Your software and what it does
- **Who is your market?**
 - Code contributors and why involved
 - Types of end users and what problem your project solves
 - Potentially aligned projects, technologies, corporate strategies
 - Ecosystem to reach, your intended market?
- **What channels can you use to reach your market?**
 - How do you reach these targets?
- **What is your key positioning?**



Prepare to Persevere

Alliances Add Visibility



Identify a Spokesperson

“How do you tell a Linux developer likes you?”



Tux in Torino, Italy

They look at your shoes instead of their own.”

HINT: That would not be your spokesperson

Their job is like finding a job – the schmooze marketing part. i.e. Biz Dev.

- Network: Dinner events, Linux events, local LUGs
- Share: what you have to offer and ask for help and people to get involved
- Follow through and be persistent but not annoying
- Relationships not services agreements
- If not you, get someone on your team who can
- Be memorable
 - Blog, website, articles
 - Goofy handouts help
 - T-Shirt, Stickers, fun cards
 - Be a Speaker or a Volunteer at a show

Now you have a Team

- Create an environment where contributors have a voice
 - Governance model, forums for requirements discussions and feedback
- Create Channels for Transparency and honesty
 - Create open forums for requirements gathering and feedback
- Create a marketing plan
 - Real useful technical marketing
 - Case Studies, white papers, How-Tos, Application Notes, Sample code, code fests, training
- Identify a community manager
 - Attracts developers, helps resource, ways to share, etc.
 - They are like operations manager for the project (infrastructure, website, IRC, code reviews etc.)
 - Offloads from maintainer, but this may also BE the maintainer





Case study: Yocto Project

- **STRUCTURE:**
 - “Advocacy” has been part of the governance structure since inception
 - Member \$
- **CHANNELS:** Laser focus on our audience
 - ELC Consistency – we picked our most important conference
- **UNIFIED:**
 - We promote our competitors within the project, as much as our personal allegiances
 - All companies at the same show, talk about the project in a unified way
 - Each company markets their contributions to the project separately and on their own
- **BRANDING:** All project oriented
 - No corporation could brand project stuff until the project had name recognition on it's own

Case study: Yocto Project

- **MESSAGING:**

- We have messages for each key target customer, and we update them as new features and circumstances change
- If we hear customers reiterate our messaging, we know we're on track

- **LAUNCH REQUIREMENTS:**

- Wanted significant number of industry contributors first
- Had functioning but immature code, V 0.9 and not V 1.0
- Yocto Project sponsored ELC for awareness

- **FACT FOCUSED MARKETING ONLY:**

- No big claims
- Training and Documentation
- PR statements with wide participation
- Events: ELC with multiple sessions, TONs of engineers at booth, LOTS of light and REAL demos.

Conclusions

- You're not marketing, you're building awareness for an exceptional piece of technology or software
- You are building a community of developers, users and collaborators around the technology
- Don't let your project fizzle, because you have not 'marketed' your project

Attributions

<http://linuxologist.com/01general/13-linux-graffiti-art-from-around-the-world/>

<http://software.intel.com/sites/oss/>

<https://opensource.qualcomm.com/index.php>

BACKUP SLIDES

CAN YOU MARKET AN OPEN SOURCE PROJECT?

- In such an intensely engineering focused environment, the usual answer is “No, it’s the code value that makes or breaks a project”. And while most open source projects start out with ‘an itch to scratch’ and with great enthusiasm many soon fizzle as no one seems to know about the project, nor get involved. The maintainer bears the burden of contribution, communication, community and fund raising. This session will cover some best practices for marketing, yes marketing open source projects (working with or without corporate backing and community managers), and the key differences between open source marketing and regular corporate product marketing.